

A
Lawyer's Advice
TO THE
Devil's Agents:

To which is now Added
England's Shame ;
O R,
RELIGION
MORE OUR
Prattle than Practice.

Λάβε πρόνοιαν τῆ εὐσεβείας βίῃ, εὐσεβεῖ γὰρ
ἀνθρώπῳ ἐστὶ λὰ διαπαντός διδοῖ Θεός.

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A

Lawyer's Advice

TO THE

DEVIL's AGENTS, &c.

ALBEIT Men are apt to disagree in the Performance of Holy Duties, and every one adheres firmly to that Way, which in his own Opinion seems best; yet they can very readily lay aside all terms of distinction, and unanimously conspire in the Commission of Wickedness. 'Tis deemed a gross Pollution, by many ignorant Zealots, to joyn with those of different Tenents in the Worship of God; but they shall scarce make any Scruple to joyn with them in Drunkenness, and other Acts of Intemperance; and then, as they vainly fantasie, make Atonement for it, by break-

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ing forth into passionate Disputations about Religion, and magnifying that, which they profess, above all others in the whole Universe, whilst, poor deluded Creatures, they are acting quite contrary to the Rules of that Religion, they pretend to speak so highly in Commendation of: which may serve to inform us of the great depravity of our Natures, and the absolute command the Devil bears over our Faculties and Powers, when we are so ready to give Obedience to him, and follow his damnable Dictates, and engage in his vile Service, and be such forward and ambitious Practitioners, in the Unfruitful Works of Darkness, which will be our utter ruine, unless we speedily renounce them, and instead of delighting in, and practising of them, and building them up, detest them, and use our utmost Endeavours to pull them down and destroy them. And therefore 'tis mine intent to try if I can write somewhat that may tend to their Destruction, which I propose to do by considering,

First, What the Unfruitful Works of Darkness are.

Secondly,

Secondly, That we are not to converse with those that we know to be guilty of them, unless it be in order to their Conversion and Amendment.

Thirdly, That 'tis the Duty of all, tho' chiefly of Ministers, earnestly to endeavour their Abolition, by a continual reproving of them.

All those Sins that are forbidden in the Gospel, as unbecoming the pure Professors thereof, and daz'ling the lustre of their Profession, which should shine forth, and illuminate those that live in the obscure parts of the Earth, without the knowledge of God, and help to guide them to the true knowledge and Worship of him, may be properly called the Works of Darkness; because they were the continual Practice of those wicked *Gentiles*, that walked in the Vanity of their Minds, and had their Understandings darkened, and were alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their Hearts, which were past feeling, and dark'ned, and they were unwilling to retain the Knowledge of God and his Laws any longer, and began to a-

bound with horrible Ingratitude towards him: And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, so he, in his just Anger, gave them over to a Reprobate Mind, *εἰς ἀδόκιμον νῦν*, to a Mind void of Judgment, so that they were filled with all Unrighteousness, and involved in the Unfruitful Works of Darkness; of which you have a Catalogue in the first Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, from the 29th Verse, to the end of the Chapter, which are these, *Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness, Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity, Whispering, Back-biting, Hating of God, Despightfulness, Pride, Boasting, Inventing of evil Things, Disobedience to Parents, Being without Understanding, Covenant-breaking, Want of Natural Affection, Implacableness, Unmercifulness*, and which is the highest Aggravation of these, and if there are any other such like Works of Darkness, besides the doing of them, *the taking pleasure in them that do them*. But why are these Works called Unfruitful? Evil Works have fruit, as well as good ones; but here lies the difference, he that does good works, labours for

for himself, and reaps the fruit of them; but he that does evil works, labours not for himself, but for the Devil, and he reaps the fruit of them; and therefore they are said to be unfruitful to the Person that does them, because not he, but the Devil has the fruit of them; and he will pay him his wages, which will be everlasting Torments in that dreadful place, where the Worm that gnaws upon the Conscience, never dies, and the fire is not quenched, *Isa.* the last Chapter, at the last Verse. The Consideration of which sad effect of these Works of Darknes brings me to the second part of my Discourse, to wit,

That we are not to converse with those we know to be guilty of them, unless it be in order to their Conversion and Amendment.

First, Because we were sometimes Darknes, but now are we Light in the Lord, and know that 'tis the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us, that we walk circumspectly, and keep our selves as free, as possibly we can, from all manner of Pollutions, and endeavour both to know and do what is acceptable and well-pleasing to God,
which

which we cannot do, if we converse with the Wicked ; I mean by conversing, bearing a part with them in the acts of wickedness, and running to the same excess of Riot, that they may not speak evil of us, as Sinners frequently do of those that decline their evil Conversation, and will not be their Companions in sin, 1 Pet. 4. 3, 4, 5. *For the time past of our Life may suffice us to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, when we walked in Lasciviousness, Lusts, Excess of Wine, Revellings, Banqueting, and abominable Idolatries. Wherein they think it strange, that ye run not with them to the same excess of Riot, speaking evil of you : Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the Quick and the Dead.* And what is more common than for a Company of Drunkards, which perhaps, in politer Language, call themselves, *A Merry Society*, to upbraid one that shall refuse to go to one of the Houses of Intemperance with them, with the reproachful Terms of being an Avaricious Person, and one possessed with a Spirit of Covetousness in an intense Degree ; and that 'tis not out of any dislike or aversion to the thing, because he thinks it

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a Sin, that he refuses to go with them, but because he is loth to part with that, which, according to their rash and unadvised Sentiments, he looks upon as an inestimable Treasure, and not lightly to be parted with, his Money. And thus with vain and uncharitable Arguments drawn from groundless suppositions, and mixed with a few derisive Expressions, they strengthen and confirm themselves in their sinful Practices, and as brisk Agents for Hell, endeavour, as much as in them lies, to bring others into them also. But suppose this person thus under Derision, because he resists these Solicitations to Vice, should be addicted to Covetousness, it cannot properly be said to be that which keeps him from this Sin, neither can he in the least be said to be guilty of it, by abstaining from it ; for he only is the Covetous Man, who, when it is his part to receive, receives more than he ought ; and when it is his part to disburse, disburses less than he ought ; and desires that, which of right belongs not unto him, and through Oppression and Injustice encreases his Substance ; and not he that refuses to waste what is justly his own in
sinful

sinful Extravagancies. And as we ought not to speak or think evilly of, or envy those that by their honest Industry, and refraining the wastful Conversation of the Ungodly, improve what they have; but to praise and commend them, and endeavour to imitate them; so neither ought we to envy those that enrich themselves by Oppression, or choose any of their ways, as the Wise Man says, Prov. 3. 31. *Envy thou not the Oppressor, and choose none of his ways.* And here those evil-minded People, that are apt to envy their Neighbours, because they live in better Reputation, and grow richer than they, may see their Folly and Sin in disobeying God's Command. For if they get them fairly and justly, they are the Blessings of God, and 'tis his Pleasure they should have them, because he knows if they will imploy them to a good use; and he that is angry, and through envy repines at this, repines at the Mercies of God, and is in effect angry with God, tho' he may level his Anger only at the Man envied, and vainly think it terminates in him, because he gives Riches and Honour to that Person, which he is unwilling should have them;

them ; as if he knew better how to bestow God's Gifts, than he himself does ; and this is no small Reflection, tho' perhaps he thinks not of it, upon God's Omniscience, and by consequence a most heinous Sin. And on the other side, if they get them through Dishonesty and Injustice, we are under the like Obligation not to envy them ; for tho' God may suffer them to flourish for a while, yet when he sees fit, he can soon stop their sinful Progress, either by extending his pardoning and preventing Grace, if they reform, and sincerely ask for it, or by exerting his Power and Justice, if they persevere and continue obstinate in their wickedness, and casting them down into Destruction. And the thoughts of this soon made the Prophet *David* understand his error in envying the Prosperity of the Wicked, when he went into the Sanctuary to know the reason of it, Psal. 73. 16, 17, 18, 19. v. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. Until I went into the Sanctuary of God, then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castedst them down into Destruction. How are they brought into Desolation*

as in a moment ? They are utterly consumed with terrours. And moreover, a Man cannot envy others, without vexing and disquieting himself, he carries a Tormentour in his own Breast ; and therefore the Holy Spirit of God so severely declaims against this Sin in Sacred Writ, because he would not have Men so foolishly sinful, as to afflict and punish themselves, Prov. 24. 19, 20, Fret not thy self because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked. For there shall be no reward to the evil Man, the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

Secondly, We must not converse with the Wicked, because we shall not only defile our selves, and help to strengthen and confirm them in their ungodly Courses, but entice others by our evil Examples to do the like ; for evil Examples will be sooner imitated (if we may credit daily experience) than good ones, especially amongst such People, as this Prophane Age abounds with, which have naturally so strong a Tendency and Inclination to wickedness. For if ever we had occasion to take up the Prophet *Hosea's* Complaint, Chap. 4. Ver. 2. *Now is the time, for by Swearing, and Lying,*
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and Killing, and Stealing, and committing Adultery, they break out, and Blood touches Blood. The word in the Original for Blood, is spoken plurally **דמים** *Bloods*, to express the great quantity that was spilt. And what was the cause of all this Blood-shed, but the Sin of the People? And has there not been of late, and is there not still, a great deal of Blood spilt amongst us that call our selves Christians, from the same cause, when such Multitudes fall by the Sword? Which we report only as matter of News, little considering that our wickedness is partly the occasion of their violent and sanguinary Deaths, and that so far as we by our Sins have been accessory to their Deaths, so far, without a speedy and sincere asking of Pardon and Forgiveness, we shall be obliged to answer for them. And how can we ever expect, that God should bless our Forces with Success abroad, if we lie thus shamefully wallowing in wickedness at home? But we are so foolishly favourable to our selves, as to overlook this, and attribute these Wars and Com-motions to other Causes; we know, and find there are, as in times past, tyrannizing
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and persecuting Princes and Potentates in the World, and we fanſie they are the ſole Cauſes of them, to ſatiſſie their Ambition, in enlarging their Dominions, and rendring themſelves more abſolute. 'Tis true, they are the Cauſe of Wars and Devaſtations; but 'tis only the Inſtrumental, not the Efficient Cauſe, that is Sin. Wicked and Ambitious Princes and Rulers are the Inſtruments of doing miſchief, and making confuſion in the Earth, but 'tis the ſin of the People, as well as their own, that ſets them on Work. For God ſuffers wicked men to bear Rule, that they may declare themſelves Enemies to the Inhabitants of the Earth, and puniſh them for their Iniquity. And whenſoever a potent Enemy or Enemies begin to diſturb the Peace and Tranquillity of a Kingdom, or Commonwealth, they may aſſure themſelves, whatever other Reaſons they may imagine there are for it, that their ways are not pleaſing to God. For if they were, he would force them to be at Peace with them, Prov. 16. 7. *When a Man's ways pleaſe the Lord, he makes even his Enemies to be at Peace with him.* God draws ſuch a Line of defence about
good

good Men, that live in his Fear and Service, that their most inveterate Enemies have not power to hurt them, 1 Pet. 3. 13. *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* But wicked Men lie open to the Wrath of God, and the fury and malice of their Adversaries, and must never expect any real peace and comfort, unless they return from the error of their ways, if the Scripture be true; for God says plainly, there they shall have no peace, *Isaiah the 57th. at the two last Verses, But the wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked.* And hence we may learn the Reason why we can't enjoy Peace, 'tis because we don't seek it in the right way, we don't seek it in Righteousness: for 'tis not a great number of Men with Swords and Spears that can procure it, without it; and if ever we would have our Nation exalted, it must be by Righteousness, *Prov. 14. 34. Righteousness exalts a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach to any people.* And what pleasure and satisfaction can a considering person take in going in Company, or Converſing

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with the workers of Iniquity, and walking with wicked Men, whose very Actions carry so much shame and reproach in them? What does it avail any one to be accounted a brisk Man, and of a pleasant Conversation amongst his airy and injudicious fellow-sinners, and so have their Friendship and Commendation; when in the mean time he does that which is hateful to God, and provokes his anger, the effect of which will be his utter overthrow, and the confusion of his own Face? Jer. 7. 19. *Do they provoke me to anger, says the Lord? Do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own Faces?* But you'll say, the World is very full of wicked people, and therefore you must needs converse with them, unless you go out of the World. True it is, you must needs converse with them in a civil way of Commerce, and Offices of kindness, and to endeavour the reforming of them; and such a Conversation the Holy Men of former Ages have been forced to have with the wicked, by living amongst them, tho' much to their grief and Vexation, as righteous Lot was vexed from day to day with the ungodly doings of the filthy

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thy Sodomites. And the Prophet David laments it as his great Unhappiness, that he was forced to live amongst ungodly Men, Psal. 120. 5. *Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech; that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar.* As if he should have said, I am sorry that this place, which I sought to dwell in, hoping it had been a godly place, should, contrary to my Expectation, and to my grief, be so ungodly, and that the Works of Darknels should so much abound here, as the signification of the words *Mesech* and *Kedar* seems to devote unto us; for by *Mesech*, which signifies either seeking, or prolonging, is to be understood a People of *Arabia* that sprang of *Japhet*, Gen. 10. 2. where it appears, that *Mesech* was one of *Japhet's* Sons; and by *Kedar*, which signifies blackness or darkness, is to be understood the *Ishmaelites*, for *Kedar* is reckon'd among the Sons of *Ishmael*, Gen. 25. 13. And these were the wicked *Israelites* that had degenerated from their pious Ancestors, and made continual Oppositions against those that were faithful, and endeavoured to retain the Piety and Integrity of their Just and Godly Parents, as you may see at

the last Verse of this Psalm, *I seek Peace, and when I speak thereof, they are bent to War.* But, tho' this must be granted as true, yet I hope we are not under a necessity of joyning with them in their wickedness; we may continue in the World, and live amongst them, without that, and must, if we will imitate those Worthies that are now in the glorious Regions of eternal Happiness, as the Holy Psalmist, who would not suffer a deceitful person to dwell within his House, nor a Lyar to tarry in his sight. And the Patriarch *Jacob*, that would not come into the Secrets of Ungodliness, or connive at it, tho' in his own Sons, as in the case of *Simeon* and *Levi*, who had defiled themselves with Blood, by killing a Man in their anger; but passionately crys out, *Instruments of cruelty are in their Habitations*; as it is in the *English* Translation; but according to the *Hebrew*, כלי חמס מכרתיהם: Instruments of Violence are in their Covenants, Treaties, or Assemblies; unless we choose rather to follow *R. Salom* his Explication of the word מכרות who makes it to signifie Swords; then we must read it thus, Their Swords are Weapons of wrong, or violence.

violence. O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret, unto their Assembly mine honour be not thou united; for in their anger they slew a Man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel; I'll divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel, Gen. 49. 5, 6, 7. And one would think you should seek your own good so far, as to endeavour, in imitation of these pious Men, to refrain the Society of the wicked; but lest you should not, I'll enforce it with the command of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 5. 11. But now I have written unto you not to keep Company; if any Man that is called a Brother, (as all Christians are, and ought to live as Brethren) be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such an one, no, not to eat. Except it be for the same end that our Saviour did eat with Publicans and Sinners, that is, in order to their Conversion and Amendment, and to have an opportunity of reprovng of them, and contributing as much as you can towards destroying the unprofitable Works of Darkness, which is the Duty of all, tho'

chiefly of Ministers, as I am now to prove.

'Tis not enough for us to abstain from sin our selves, and thence take occasion to pride our selves in our own Righteousness, and boast of it, and deride the Failings of others; but we must use our utmost Endeavours to keep others out of sin also, by a friendly and compassionate rebuking of them, whensoever we see them like to fall under Temptation, according to the express command of God, *Lev. 19. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him,* or as the Original words, *ולא-חשא עלי חטא:* more properly signifie, That thou bear not sin for him, or against him. So that we may see we cannot withhold reproof from Offenders, without being guilty of bearing sin against them, and breaking God's Command. And here-upon St. *Jude* instructs us how we should do it, in the 22d. and 23d. Verses of his Epistle, to wit, by making a difference, and calmly perswading the more ignorant and flexible Sinners, that will hearken to one reasoning with them for their own good,
implied

implied in those Words, *And of some have compassion*: But to the more brutish and obstinate offenders, that despise calm and friendly Reproofs and Admonitions, you must use Arguments, that have somewhat of terrour mixed with them, and try if you can fear and affright them out of their wickedness, and then keep them from falling into it again, by a pious severity, implied in those words, *And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire*. That is, pulling them out of Sin, which is Metaphorically and eventually called Fire, because it will as certainly consume and destroy the Soul (tho' for the present we may not be sensible of it) as the Fire would the Body, if it were cast into it. And thus far private Men are obliged to reprove Sinners; as for Magistrates, and Men in Authority, they are obliged to go farther, and if these Methods will not do, inflict punishment upon them; for they are the Ministers of God, and Revengers to execute Wrath upon them that do evil, *Rom. 13. 4*. And 'tis recorded to that good Governour *Josiah's* Praise, that he forced the *Israelites* to serve the Lord, *2 Chron. 34*. at the two last Verses,

And Josiah took away all the Abominations out of all the Countries that pertained to the Children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God. And all his Days they departed not from following the Lord the God of their Fathers. And such punishment would not only be a means of restraining the Offenders, upon whom it is inflicted, but of making others also beware of offending, for, *Smite a Scornor* (says Solomon) *and the Simple will beware*, Prov. 19. 25. And if the punishment that the Law appoints for obstinate and notorious Offenders, such as prophane Swearers, Drunkards, Adulterers, Thieves, and the like, was duly and impartially inflicted, such horrid Crimes and Offences would not be so common amongst us, as to the shame of our Profession of Christianity, which most severely forbids them, now they are. And this was the method that Moses commanded the People of Israel to take to put a stop to presumption, the making the presumptuous person suffer, Deut. 17. 12, 13. And the Man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the Priest, (that stands to minister

minister there before the Lord thy God) or unto the Judge, even that Man shall die, and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And all the People shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously. But alas! these things are now neglected, and this Duty of reproving sin has been so long, and by so many suspended, that 'tis commonly looked upon as a Solœcism, or fault in a Man's Manners, and a Reflection upon his Education to do it. But these Excuses are so senseless, and have so little weight in them, that one would think no one should be so foolish as to omit it upon this, or any such like account, especially if he has recourse to St. James's Saying, in his last Chapter, at the two last Verses, Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. And certainly 'tis better, and he gains more that saves a Soul from Death, that is, Damnation, which is called the second Death, or Death everlasting, as 'tis opposite to Salvation, which may be said to be the second Life, or Life everlasting,
Rev.

Rev. 21. 8. than he that gains an Empire: For a Soul is more worth, than all the riches in the World. And now consider, shall I that carry about so precious a Jewel, through neglect and carelesness, suffer the Devil to steal him away from me? What, spend all my time in taking care of the corruptible Continent (I mean the Body) which will e're long be turned into Dust, and neglect the incorruptible thing contained in it, the immortal Spirit, which shall live to all Eternity? Why shall I suffer the Devil to cast his venomous Darts through the wide Breaches, that sin continually makes into my Soul? Should not I use my utmost endeavours to prevent an Enemy of wounding my flesh, and shall I patiently permit the greatest and most malicious Enemy, the Devil, to wound my Soul unto Death, and eternal Damnation? But oh, the wonderful subtilty of the grand Adversary of Mankind! He covers his malicious designs under pretence of gratifying Mens Lusts, and rendering their Lives more pleasurable, and sily perswading of them, that these things are consistent with the liberty of the Gospel, which, as the wicked

wicked *Simon Magus*, that great Factour of the Devil, used to say, was not intended to abridge Men of their carnal Delights and worldly Pleasures, and telling of them, *If they believe the Scriptures, and are called Christians, and come now and then to their Assemblies, they need not be so strict and circumspect in their Lives, nor so solicitous about their Salvation;* which, according to his deceitful way of arguing, is so easily attainable. And thus he hardens Men against the loving Calls, and earnest Entreaties of Christ, in his Holy Word, and so draws them from sin to sin, from a less to a greater, "till at length he brings them to that degree of wickedness, as to commit sin with greediness, as the Apostle says, *Ephes. 4. 19. Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto Lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* And now he thinks he has them secure, and if at any time their grieved Consciences represent to them the miserableness of their condition, and they are terrified with the distracting thoughts of their ensuing misery into a weak resolution of endeavouring to get out of this lamentable state, he derides them, and tells them,

them, 'Tis too late, the Season for doing it is over, and they were as good take what pleasure they can here, for it is in vain for them to expect any hereafter, for Christ will not accept those that are so loaded with Iniquity as they are: But, to their unexpressible comfort, if they will turn from the evil of their ways, and diligently follow after Righteousness, they shall immediately hear Christ contradicting this Father of Lies, and kindly inviting of them to come unto him, and graciously promising of them rest, Matth.

II. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I'll give you rest.* And here take notice of the extraordinary Love of Christ, who thus kindly invites Sinners, which have been his greatest Enemies, and despised, and disobeyed his Holy Precepts, and so plunged themselves into that trouble and vexation, which they are in no wise capable of getting out of, without his assistance, to come unto him for relief. Who but a Madman would disoblige him, and refuse to accept his Invitation, when it proceeds from the pure motions of his Love towards us, and an earnest Desire of our being everlastingly happy? If our Saviour indeed did
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intreat us, like many frail Mortals, ambitious of Empire and Greatness, to give Obedience to his Commands, and live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World, only for his own Interest and Advantage, the case were somewhat altered; but 'tis purely for our good, that we may escape the eternal Damnation of Hell, and reign with him for ever in the Kingdom of Heaven, and behold his Glory, *John 17. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.* And now what a strange pass are the people of this Impious Generation come to, that they'll rather obey the Devil, that never did any thing for them, but always acts against them, as in their first Parents, so ever since, and continually endeavours their ruine; than they will God, who created them, and redeemed them from that dreadful and everlasting Punishment they were rendered obnoxious to by the Fall, by the most ignominious Death of his dear Son, and continually protects them with his preserving mercy, without which, they would long ago have been consumed
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and swallowed up in the Gulph of Destruction, Psal. 124. 1, 2, 3. *If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, now may Israel say: If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, when Men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.* And yet the Allurements of a Woman, that makes Profession of Obscenity, or the Incitement of a Companion in wickedness, shall sooner draw a man into Adultery, Drunkenness, prophaning of the Lord's Day, and other horrid Vices, than the most tender and bleeding Dissuasives of a Crucified Jesus shall keep him from them: and with their foolish Mirth, and vain Discourses, they drown the Voice of God, crying, *Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their Children for ever,* Deut. 5. 29. But if this calm, soft, and requesting Language from God will not prevail with them, to turn them from their Iniquities, they must expect to hear him speaking to them in another strain, and that very terrible, Mal. 3. 5. *And I'll come near to you to Judgment,*

ment, and I'll be a swift witness against the Sorcerers, and against the Adulterers, and against false Swearers, and against those that oppress (or defraud) the Hireling in his wages, the Widow, and the Fatherless, and that turn aside the Stranger from his right, and fear not me, says the Lord of Hosts. God will not always wait, though he does with many obstinate Sinners a long time, with the offers of Mercy, if they will not accept it in that time and manner, that he thinks fit to bestow it upon them; for a Man may defer making his Reconciliation to God so long, 'till he may withdraw his assisting Grace from him, and let angry Justice take place of abused Mercy, and then it can never be done, but he must be content to be amongst those, whose end is Destruction, and may sadly apply that Saying of our Saviour, *Luk. 19. 42.* to his own particular case, *If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy Day, the things which belong unto thy Peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.* And you may see an Example of it in wicked Esau, who could find no place of Repentance, though he sought it carefully with Tears, *Heb. 12. 17.* And if a Man
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did but seriously consider, to what a prodigious height of wickedness the World is now grown, he may have just cause to admire at the great patience of the Almighty, in bearing with such gross Impieties, and not drawing the Sword of his Justice, and cutting the prophane Committers of them from the Face of the Earth; for they are grown more impious, than the Idolatrous Ancients of the House of *Israel*, for they did their wickedness in the dark, every Man in the Chambers of his Imagery, for they say, *The Lord sees us not, the Lord has forsaken the Earth*; and so endeavoured to conceal it, at least they fancied it would not be taken so much notice of by the Almighty, *Ez. 8. 12.* but these are more impudent, and commit the most heinous sins in the face of the whole World, and are so far from being ashamed, that they glory in it, and think it an addition to their Reputation, which they foolishly imagine is highly increased by approving themselves men of greater Abilities in Acts of Debauchery than other men: Otherwise, why do our immoderate Drinkers take such pleasure, and so applaud themselves, in that they are able to drink
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down others of more infirm Bodies and weaker Brains, and not only triumph over them for the present, but frequently report it afterwards, as if it tended to their credit, with a kind of rejoycing? But let them know themselves to be wicked in so doing, and that the rejoycing of the wicked is not good; and sure I am, that when Men thus rejoyce and glory in their sin, they glory in their shame, as the Apostle says, *Philip. 3. 19.* And as they thus deal with God in wickedness, so must they expect he will deal with them in fury, *Ez. 8.* at the last Verse, *Therefore will I also deal in fury; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine Ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.*

But have not those whose profession obliges them to be the most earnest and careful Reprovers of Sin, been defective in it, and so permitted this Flood of Wickedness to flow in upon us with greater violence than otherwise it would? We will see what their Office is, and how they discharge it, and we shall soon be resolved: They are set as Watchmen to the People, and are to cry aloud and spare not, and to lift up
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their voice like Trumpets, and shew the people their Transgressions, and the House of *Jacob* (that is, the whole Family of Believers) their sins, *Isa.* 58. 1. And this they do in alarming Sinners, though with too much coldness and indifferency, some of them, from the Pulpit; but this is not all they ought to do, for if they find that sin grows so strong amongst their Auditors, that publick Preaching will not suppress it, they might do well to speak unto them by dissuasive Letters, if they are capable of reading and understanding of them: but if they are of so perverse and reprobate a mind that they will not do; then let them try the last Remedy, and have frequent personal conference with them, and not suffer sin, the Devil's Standard-bearer, to display his triumphant Banners in the hearts of their people without controul. But ease and idleness will soon frame excuses for them, and tell them, this is the ready way to be accounted busie impertinent persons, and become the common objects of contempt and derision amongst their hearers, and what is this, but under colour of being afraid of offending their Hearers, being
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unwilling to be too busy for God, and the good of their Souls, and disobeying the command of the Apostle, who bids them *be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine?* 2 Tim.

4. 2. For I would fain know how that Minister keeps a diligent watch over the Souls of his Congregation, as he that must give an Account, when he knows any one of them to live in a continual course of Swearing, Drunkenness, and other damnable sins, and does not follow him earnestly with private reproof, when he may better state his case to him, than in a publick Discourse; although, I think, Divines might descend more to particular Cases in their publick Preachings, than many of them do, if they did not aim more at a learned and exact Method, than a plain edifying Discourse. For why should not a Minister, that is preaching against any particular sin, that he knows one Man in his Congregation to be more addicted to than any of the rest, speak plainly to him, as the Prophet *Nathan* did to *David*, and say, *Thou art the Man*; for some must be reprov'd openly, that others may fear, 1 Tim. 5.

20. *Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear.* But what if he should take offence at this, and grow more obstinate in his sinful Practices? Then take a convenient opportunity of discoursing with him in private about it, and calmly shew him the reasonableness and necessity of it, and try whether Arguments drawn from the Mercies of God, which he thus shamefully abuses, will work him into a Reformation, and if that will not do, make forcible application of the Threats of God against obstinate Sinners, and raise an Epitome of Hell in his Breast; wound his Conscience to the quick, and dress the Wounds with Fire and Brimstone, and never suffer him to be at rest till he reforms; ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make *Jerusalem* (this Nation, every one's particular Congregation) a praise in the Earth. You have Instruments put into your hands for the doing of it if you would make good use of them, The Word of God, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and

and Spirit, and of the Joynts and Marrow, and is a discerner of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart; and would soon separate, if it were well applied, between sin and the sinner. But many Pastors now-a-days, are too much like those blind Watchmen the Prophet *Isaiah* inveighs against, Chap. the 56th. at the three last Verses, to do this; *His Watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb Dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy Dogs which can never have enough, and they are Shepherds that cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his Quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch Wine, and we will fill our selves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.* And these are they, against whose evil Example the Apostle forewarns us, when he bids us feed the Flock of God, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. *Feed the Flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: Neither as being Lords over God's*

Heritage; but being Examples to the Flock. But now Men seem to endeavour rather to feed themselves of the flock, than to feed it, else, why should any one desire two or three Benefices, when through infirmity of Body, weakness of mind, or both, he is not able to serve one, as he ought? And I doubt the very end in taking to the Ministry in some is not good; that 'tis rather to get wherewithal to live after the Lusts of their corrupt Flesh, than to do God Service by instructing the people; otherwise I cannot see how they should be so exemplary in Wickedness, instead of Righteousness, and live such loose and debauched Lives as they do, and not regard God, complaining of their spoiling his Tabernacle, and destroying his Church, and telling them, for their punishment, they shall not prosper, and their Flocks shall be (as they are already too much) scattered, *Jer. 10. 20, 21. My Tabernacle is spoiled, and all my Cords are broken; my Children are gone forth of me, and they are not; there is none to stretch forth my Tent any more, and to set up my Curtains. For the Pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord; therefore*

fore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered. Others there are, who seem to be a little more conscious of their ways, and abstain from these publick and scandalous Enormities, and are apt to complain of their Congregations scattering, and going from them, and running into Errours; but they don't take a right Method to prevent it: For, if they know that those Assemblies, to which they adjoyn themselves, are erroneous either in their Doctrine, or their Practices, why don't they go to them, or send for them, and shew them their Errours? No, 'tis beneath them to enter into a Disputation with an ignorant Mechanick, he is not capable of judging of the strength of an Argument.

Sure he must be a very ignorant person, that is not capable of judging when he is shewed to be in an error from plain Scripture-proof, which is the only Fountain, from whence a Divine ought to draw his Arguments, for convincing of Gain-sayers. And in truth 'tis a lamentable thing for a Minister to suffer any one in his Parish to live in Superstition and Errour, and not shew him it, and endeavour by frequent

conversing with him, and advising of him, to work him out of it, because he would be accounted a meek and quiet Man: Meekness indeed is a very excellent Vertue, and our blessed Saviour was very meek in suffering, and when he was reviled, he reviled not again; yet he was as fierce as a Lyon against sin and error, and in defending his People from the Snares of the Devil, and his Emissaries; and therefore called the Lyon of the Tribe of Judah, Rev. 5. 5. A Minister may do his Duty in this particular, as well as in any other, without losing the Character of a meek and peaceable person, and shall be better esteemed of by all good Men, if he does it, than if he omits it, and be so accounted of, as the Minister of Christ, and Steward of the Mysteries of God, when they see that he is faithful in the business, whereunto he was called, and as an obedient Servant to his Master Christ, is careful and exact in the discharge of his Duty. But I suppose I may give a more probable reason of their neglect in this point, for ought I know they may be afraid that these ignorant Mechanicks, as they call them, that seek instruction elsewhere, though they are
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not so well skilled in Languages, and have not read so many old Moth-eaten Authors; yet they may be almost as well acquainted with the Scriptures, by making them their daily Study, as they themselves are; and if they cannot free themselves from thence from the errors and mistakes, that are alledged against them; yet they may be able to prove, that they, to their great shame and reproach, do frequently contradict their Doctrine by their Practices, and lead Lives disagreeable to the true Apostolical Rules; which they might do prudently to consider of, and try if they can retrieve their sinking Reputation, by keeping the Law of Truth in their Mouths, and not suffering falshood or contradiction to be found in their Lips or Lives, by walking with God in Peace and Equity, and in turning many away from Iniquity, and in striving continually to subdue Sin, and make Holiness, which is now much eclipsed, and in very great decay, to revive, and shine more brightly amongst us; lest they fall deeper, than they are some of them already fallen, under that severe Accusation of the Prophet *Malachi* against the Priests of his time; when

when he first told them what their duty was, and then accused them for neglecting of it, Mal. 2. 7, 8, 9. *For the Priests Lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth; for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the Law, (הכשלתם רבים בחורה) ye have caused many to fall in the Law) ye have corrupted the Covenant of Levi, says the Lord of Hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the People, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial (ונשאים פנים and have accepted Faces) in the Law.* And yet for all this, they keep up to their former strictness and rigidity, in retaining things in the Church that are indifferent, and meerly ceremonial, and in no wise essential to the Worship of God, to the great hinderance of peace and unity amongst us, in the worship and service of the Almighty, under pretence 'tis for the grandeur. and dignity of the Church; but I suppose 'tis more for the advantage of the Church-men, that by keeping others out they may have the whole Harvest to themselves, and because
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they are afraid, that by being more painful in the work of the Ministry, and leading Lives more strict and conscientious, they would be a reproach to theirs, which are commonly more idle, loose, and prophane. And what tho' the Worship of the *Jews* was by God's allowance attended with a pompous Train of Ceremonies, to raise among the People the greater esteem of it, because they depended on Christ only in promise, whereas we have him in possession (I mean in his Gospel) and therefore we have not the like need of them, that they had; especially if we consider what a vastly different, and contrary effect they have upon us: For as they strengthened and united them in the Worship of God, they weaken and disunite us. And certainly God takes not pleasure in Ceremonies, but in sincerity of Obedience. And therefore when terms of reconciliation in this point are proposed, they are much to blame that keep not close to the Scripture in their Reasonings, but by quoting of Councils, Fathers, and School-men, and by learned and subtile ways of arguing, and by multiplying Distinctions, puzzle and weary their

their Opponents, and drown them with a flood of words, and then revile them, and triumph over them, as if they had got the Cause; and so rather than they will suffer a diminution to their Learning and Judgments, and lose the repute of being able to worst those they argue against, whether they have right on their side, or no, they will imprudently keep a foot at least, if not widen our Differences still, though to the offence of their Brethren. But this being an occasion of offence to their Brethren, by refusing to comply with them in things indifferent, is not to imitate, but to act quite contrary to the Apostle St. Paul, who said, *If his eating flesh did make his Brother to offend, he would eat no more whilst the world stood*, 1 Cor. 8. at the last Verse. He would not let his weak Brother, for whom Christ died, perish through his knowledge. And I presume we may reasonably infer from hence, That if any Garment, which he wore, when he instructed the people, had been offensive to them, and likely to have occasioned their departing from him, he would not have refused to have laid it aside, and removed their Scruple.

Scruple. For he commands the *Corinthians* to give offence to none, according to his own Example, in things indifferent, 1 Cor. 10. at the two last Verses, *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God: Even as I please all men in all things* (meaning indifferent things) *not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.* 'Tis strange there should be such a disagreement amongst us in matters of Religion; did we not all spring from the same root? Have we not one Father? Has not one God created us all? And have we not one Saviour, one Holy Ghost, one Hope, Faith, and Baptism? And as Christ is our Head, and we his Body, by the like proportion as the Members of a natural Body, tend all to the mutual Decency, Service, and Succour of the same Body, so we should do one for another, to make up the mystical Body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12. 27. *Now ye are the Body of Christ, and Members in particular.* And what is the reason we don't do this? 'Tis because we are Carnal, 1 Cor. 3. 3. *For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not*

not carnal, and walk as men? (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε : and walk according to Man : ἢ κατὰ Θεόν, not according to God) And the only way to remedy this, is to become more spiritual, and to endeavour to abound as much in the fruits of the Spirit, as we have hitherto in the fruits of the flesh; and then we shall not be so desirous of vain Glory, nor so apt to provoke and envy one another: But 'tis to be hoped one party would as readily ascend, as the other should descend, and so they would meet, and agree in the mean; which they must do, if ever there be a lasting Reconciliation amongst them: For both Parties are in fault, the Dissenters in requiring too much alteration in our publick way of worship; the Church of *England* in being unwilling to allow enough. And thus having shewn the failings of your Pastors and Ministers towards you, that I may not be liable to an Accusation of partiality, and supposed to have done it out of any prejudice towards them, I shall now shew yours to them, that both Priest and People may see their Errours, and forsake them; lest as they are alike in their offences; so also they should

should be alike in their Punishments, as the Prophet *Hosea* says in his 4th. Chapter at the 9th: and 10th. Verses, *And there shall be like People, like Priest, and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings. For they shall eat, and not have enough; they shall commit Whoredom, and shall not encrease, because they have left off to take heed to the Lord.*

And First, You are apt rashly to censure your Ministers, and affirm that they do not take pains enough in their Stations, and therefore do not Preach to you with that liveliness and earnestness that otherwise they might; but don't consider that you your selves are in a great measure the occasion of it. For what can more discourage a Minister, than, when he has preached ten or twenty years against gross and heinous sins, to find them reign as much or more in his Congregation, than when he first came to it, and that almost all his Labour is lost, as to the reforming of his sinful Hearers, and his Doctrine despised and neglected? Is not this the way to help to stop and hinder the Utterance of your Ministers, instead of praying that it may be given to them, according

according to the Apostle's Command, that they may be bold to make known the Mysteries of the Gospel? *Ephes.* the last Chapter, 18, 19, 20th. Verses. *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance, and Supplication for all Saints, and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the Mystery of the Gospel: For which I am an Embassadour in Bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.* And if St. Paul had occasion for the Prayers of the People to enable him to speak as he ought; much more occasion have the Pastors of our times, who are far inferiour to him in gifts and knowledge: But truly if they could not in some measure speak as they ought, without them, I know not when they would; for I doubt many People seldom think of praying that their Teachers may be able to teach them as they ought, much less do it. But let them know that their forgetting or neglecting of it, does not in any wise make it cease to be their Duty.

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Secondly, You have not that Estimation for them that you ought, but generally contemn and despise their Office and Authority, and set less by them than the temporal Physician, and the Professor of the Law; for, though you'll advise with the one, when your Bodys are arrested by a dangerous Disease, and if your Title to your Estate be any way scrupled, you will not by any means omit consulting the other; yet you think it beneath you to advise with your Minister, though your Souls are in danger of perishing through Sin, and your Title to Heaven be never so doubtful, and will imprudently rely upon your own Judgments in this respect, although it is a matter of the greatest moment t' ye in the whole World, and that which you are highly obliged to be as well assured of, as possible you can: And hereupon 'tis you are so earnestly exhorted by the Apostle to make your Calling and Election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10. *Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.* But this may serve to inform us, and that much to our disgrace, that we are generally more careful in the preservation of our Bodies

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and Estates, which are mortal, and perish in the very using, than we are of our Souls, which are immortal, and can never cease to be, either happy, or miserable. And hence it comes to pass that your Ministers are not worthy to be sent for in your sickness, no, not in the greatest extremity of it, even at the point of Death; but perhaps you think 'tis their Duty to come: I shall not say 'tis not, for I suppose 'tis, if they know it; but I am sure if they do not come without sending for, 'tis your Duty to send for them, *Jam 5.14, 15. Is any sick among you? let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with Oyl in the Name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he has committed Sins, they shall be forgiven him.* But this Text of Scripture is somewhat intricate, and the true meaning of it may not easily be comprehended by a vulgar Capacity, and therefore I shall not think it impertinent a little to explain it. *Elders* is a Title of Dignity rather than of Age, and there were two sorts of them, the one took care of the Government and Behaviour of the Congrega-

gregation only, the other besides that did pray and preach to them also: And both these Orders were very honourable, as appears from the saying of the Apostle, 1 Tim.

5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double Honour, especially they which labour in the Word and Doctrine.* But

methinks I hear some conceited Ignorants say, How shall any one send for the Elders, there are none in our Church? But that is their mistake: All Ecclesiasticks compleated in sacred Orders, by what Titles soever they are dignified, or distinguished, are Elders; and so were the very Apostles also, as they frequently stile themselves,

1 Pet. 5. 1. *The Elders* (that is, those that are Pastors, and have the care of the Church, as you may easily gather from the following Verse) *which are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder.* But then you'll say, Why

don't we call them so? We do in effect so call them; for our word *Priest* is the original word for Elder, which is *Πρεσβύτερος*, contracted, or shortened. And as for the word *Bishop*, which many seem to take offence at, it is derived from the Saxon word *Bisceop*, and that from the Greek word

Ἐπισκοπος, which is the very Title by which those of the highest Dignity in the Church were stiled in the Apostles days, *Tit. 1. 7.* and signifies an *Inspector*; or him to whom the Over-sight of the Church belongs; and this Name I take to be given to them for this reason, because, as it was the Office of him that was called by this Name among the Heathens, to see that their temporal Food was duly administred to them; so it is the Office of a Bishop to take care that Christians may have their spiritual food duly administred to them: And though some, that delight in Novelties, choose rather to call those that officiate in their Churches, Ministers, and Superintendents, than Priests and Bishops, they are the same thing, only Priest and Bishop are derived from *Greek* Fountains, which is the Original Language of the New Testament, and Minister and Superintendent, the one is a *Latin* word, and the other derived from a *Latin* word; and if they abhor the Doctrine of the *Latin* Church, so much as they pretend, I wonder why they should have such an esteem for its Language, as rather to let it enter into their Church by their

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Ecclesiastical Titles, than the Greek, or words derived from it, which is the Language Apostolical. And truly those persons act very imprudently, that raise Controversies about, and contend against, and hate the innocent Names, by which those of the Holy Function are distinguished, for the Offences of the Persons called by them; for they neither occasion their offending, neither can they restrain them from it. And whereas mention is here made of the sick's being saved, and raised up, and his sins forgiven, through the Blessing of the Lord upon the Prayer of Faith; we must understand, that the Elders in the Apostolical Days, were endued with miraculous Gifts, as the Apostles themselves were, so as to be able through the strength of their Prayers and Exhortations to heal the sick, and take away the principal cause of Distempers from them, which was their sins, by procuring for them the forgiveness of them. And the anointing with Oyl was used as the sign of this miraculous Gift of healing, and obtaining the forgiveness of sick Men's sins by their Prayers, which our Church has very judiciously laid aside, as

not necessary, seeing *healing*, the thing signified by it, as well as all other miraculous Gifts ceased, when the end, for which they were designed, which was a Confirmation and Establishment of the Gospel sufficient for its support, encrease, and further propagation without them, was accomplished: which was, as some Church-Historians tell us, about the end of the third, or shortly upon the beginning of the fourth Century, which is about thirteen hundred years since. And those superstitious persons that still make use of this anointing the Sick with Oyl, as the Elders in the Primitive times did, unless they could in the like miraculous manner perform the thing signified by it, and restore them to Health, and obtain the Remission of their Sins, without the use of other means, as they did, do but shew their folly, and render themselves obnoxious to Ridicule and Derision amongst People of Understanding, that have not renounced their Senses, and imprudently yielded themselves up to fraudulent persons Impositions, and captivated their Belief to the Conduct of Impostors and Deceivers, which are forced to pretend to these, and
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such like wonderful performances, to bear up their Reputation amongst those they have so far deluded, as in part to satisfy their Ambition and Covetousness by making Merchandize of them, as the Apostle foretold of them, 2 Pet. 2. 3. *And through Covetousness shall they with feigned words make Merchandize of you,* (but let them read the remaining part of the Verse, and see how fast Judgment and Damnation are coming upon them for it) *whose Judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their Damnation slumbers not.* And these are the evil Men, that by grossly abusing their power in the Church, have made the People unwilling to allow the Reformed Churches so much power as Christ has given them, and will scarce be induced to believe that they ought, or that 'tis to any purpose for them, if their Consciences are loaded and disquieted through any grievous Crimes they have been guilty of, to make confession of them to their Pastors and Teachers, and ask their Advice, and desire them to put them in the best and most effectual method towards the getting of their Grief removed, and their sins pardoned, and that they would help

and assist them, by bestowing their fervent Prayers upon them, towards the doing of it, although the Apostle expressly commands us to confess our Faults one to another, and pray for one another that we may be healed, *Jam. 5. 16.* and then gives an encouraging reason drawn from the powerful effect of Prayer; *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous Man avails much.* And if we are obliged to confess our faults one to another, and pray one for another towards the healing of them, much rather to the Minister, that he may pray for us towards the healing of our Offences. Nor does the true and faithful Minister's power end here, in hearing the Confessions of his people, and praying for them; but it extends further, and authorizes him, when he finds the Offender has performed those acts of Repentance, which God's Holy Word requires, to apply the merciful Promises of God to repenting Sinners, in the forgiveness of their sins, unto him, and declare his Crimes pardoned, through the great Mercies of God, and the Merits of his dear Son Jesus Christ, and so reconcile him to God, as having received from him the Ministry

nistry of Reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5. 18. And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the Ministry of Reconciliation.

Thirdly, Some of you think them burdensome, and that their allowance is too great, and above their Deserts; and hereupon argue that Tithes are not of Divine Institution, and that you are no where commanded to pay them in the New Testament. But in what part of the same Testament are you forbidden to pay them? And although they are not ordained in express words in the Gospel by Christ; yet he has ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of it, 1 Cor. 9. 13, 14. *Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the Temple? And they which wait at the Altar, are partakers with the Altar. Even so has the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.* And can you find out any better way of raising wherewithal they may live upon, than by giving of them Tithes? And this I may say for

for the Lawfulness and Authority of them, that our Saviour told the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* that they ought to pay them; which I suppose he would not have done, if he had intended to abolish them, and that they should not have been paid under the Gospel, *Matt. 23. 23. Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye pay Tithe of Mint, and Anise, and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith; these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* And here observe that this Woe is not denounced against them, because of their exactness in paying Tithes, even to the very Herbs; but because of their Hypocrisie, in not being as exact in things of greater concern, as making right Judgment in deciding of Controversies, shewing Mercy, and relieving the oppressed, and being as faithful in the performance of their Promises, as they were in paying of Tithes, both which ought to have been done with the like exactness. And this may serve to admonish us, as well as let us know that our Saviour allowed of paying Tithes in his time,

time, against the folly and errour of such Hypocrites, as will be very exact and careful in things of less moment, and remiss and careless, and apt to pass over those things that are of far greater concern. And the reason of the Apostle's not requiring Tithes, may be this, because they would not hinder the progress of the Gospel, by giving them the least occasion of thinking they preached it more for their own profit and advantage, than for their Good: And hereupon the Apostle says, he wrought with his own hands that he might not be chargeable to any of them; not but that he had power to forbear working, and live by preaching the Gospel, as well as others; but he did not use this power, but rather suffered all things, lest he should make his Doctrine the less esteemed, and hinder the Gospel of Christ, *1 Cor. 19. 12. If others be Partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless, we have not used this power, but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ.* But if the Ministers of our Times were obliged to do the like, we should soon have but mean preaching,

ing, and a very ignorant and contemptible Ministry: and instead of answering the Controversies and Objections of our learned Adversaries with our Tongues or Pens, we must answer them with our Swords, which I think will hardly be allowed to be the true Evangelical, or Gospel-way of answering of them. For it pleased God to furnish the Apostles with extraordinary means to preach and declare his Will; so that if they were disposed to supply their Necessities by any servile Occupation (as *St. Paul* did by Tent making, *Acts* 18. 3.) it could not any ways disfigure them for teaching and instructing the People; for what they were to speak and teach was infused into them, without any pains or study of theirs, in that very hour, in which they were to speak it, *Matt.* 10. 19. *But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given in that same hour what ye shall speak.* But God has thought fit to let ordinary means take place in these latter Ages, and Men must, or ought at least, by continual study and industry to qualify themselves for the Work
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of the Ministry; and must be supported of those they instruct, in the doing of it, and this they ought to do freely, and not to count it a great thing, but most reasonable, that they should reap their carnal things, which sow to them spiritual things, 1 Cor. 9. 11. *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*

Fourthly, If they inveigh sharply against sin, and a little terrifie you with the forethoughts of Hell and Damnation, you are ready to exclaim against the severity of their Doctrine, and to say, 'Tis the ready way to preach you to Desperation; but this is your misunderstanding of them, they intend not to preach you to desperation in that sense you take the Word in, that is, so as to make you despair of attaining Heaven, but only to make you despair of attaining of it in the condition many of you are now in, (which sort of Desperation may be a means of putting you into the way of Salvation) for to what purpose is it for you to hope to go to Heaven, whilst you continue in those sins you are told from

from God's Word will keep you thence? 'Tis impossible for you that are Drunkards, Thieves, Swearers, and Adulterers, and are in the way to everlasting Destruction, without a speedy Reformation and Amendment to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; unless you can get the Decrees of the Almighty revoked, and make the Apostle a Liar, for he expressly says you shall not, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Man-kind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* And again, Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. having summed up the Works of the Flesh, he says, *of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* Read the Verses, and see what the Works of the Flesh are, *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies,*

restles, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like; and know assuredly, that if you are guilty of any of them, you must forthwith ask pardon of God for it, and forsake them, otherwise they will keep you from the Seat of the Blessed. Nor is it enough for a Man to abstain from these grosser Sins towards the escaping of everlasting misery, but he must abstain from all sins, as much as is possible, though never so small; for the least sin is in it self damnable: and therefore the Apostle commands us to abstain from all appearance of evil, 1 *Thes.* 5. 22. And if your Ministers should pass this lightly over, and preach unto you smooth things; to please and delight your Fancies, and not rough and severe things to disturb and awaken your Consciences, and disquiet you in the enjoyment of your seemingly pleasant sins, they would do the Work of the Lord deceitfully, and ruine you, and pull down a Curse upon themselves, and your Blood would be required at their hands: as God tells the Prophet *Ezekiel*, that as the Blood, that was lost in the Land by the Sword,

Sword, through the neglect of the temporal Watchman, in not warning the people of their Enemies coming, should be required at his hands, so he would require the Blood of those that perished in their Iniquity, through his neglect in warning of them at his hands, whom he had made a spiritual Watchman. *So thou, O Son of Man, I have set thee a Watchman unto the House of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the Word at my Mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou doest not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his Iniquity; but his Blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy Soul,* Ezek. 33. 7, 8, 9. So you see the great necessity that lies upon them of using terrifying Discourses to you, both in reference to you and themselves; if you would but once renounce your affections to Sin, and endeavour to arrive to some perfection
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of Holiness in the fear of God, no doubt, they would soon turn the course of their Preaching, and instead of talking of Hell and everlasting Burnings, speak to you of nothing but the Gracious Promises that are made to you, and giving you the best Description, that, according to their most deliberate Conceptions of it, they could, of Heaven, and the everlasting Joys thereof: which are so great, that there are no earthly Joys, although they should much exceed that of the *Israelites*, at the Coronation of their Peaceable King, which, (as, **ויעלו כל-העם אחריו והעם מחללים בחללים ושמים שמחה גדולה ותבקע הארץ בקולם** the original words of the tenth Verse of the first Chapter of the first Book of the *Kings* declare) was so great, that the very Earth rent with the sound that they made in expressing of it, can be compared to them. But I doubt you will scarce be so kind to your selves and them, as immediately to forsake your Sins, that

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they

they may do this; you'll rather continue in them, and presume upon the Mercies of God for pardon; but the Mercies of God are conditional, and you have no right to them, unless you perform the Condition. The wicked must forsake his way, and the unrighteous Man his thoughts, and return unto the Lord, if he will have mercy and pardon: otherwise he cannot have it; for Christ came not into the World to maintain people in sin, but upon their Faith and Repentance to forgive them their Sins; this is the only way in which he will be a Saviour unto you, as you may learn from his own Words, *Luke* the 7th. Chapter, at the last Verse. This you'll say you know very well, and that you must part with your sins, or lose Heaven; but you vainly think it's time enough yet, and so defer it from Day to Day, from Week to Week, and from Year to Year, 'till you are habituated to wickedness, and so make it the more difficult to cast it off; and what

what if by deferring it thus from time to time, you should be suddenly, as many are, taken out of the World, where are you then? I shall not speak my thoughts, but leave you to judge what your place and your Portion must be for ever; very miserable, I fear.

For I must tell you, 'tis a great presumption, and very dangerous for any one to think of doing that in time to come, which God bids him do presently; 'tis as if he knew better when it were to be done than God: And if God says, To day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts; and tells you, That this is the day in which you should begin to seek after Salvation, 2 Cor. 6. 2. *Behold now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of Salvation*; How dare you defer seeking after it 'till to Morrow, much less for a longer time, as hereafter, as you call it? Is not this the ready way to provoke God to anger, and to make him Swear in his Wrath, as he did to

Stubborn Israelites, *Psalm* the 95th. at the last Verse, *That you shall not enter into his Rest?* And then you are undone to all Eternity. For, although God's Mercies are great, yet we must not carelessly and wilfully forget his Commands, and rely so much upon his Mercy, as to forget his Justice: for as he is merciful, so he is just; and a Man may run on in Wickedness so long till he becomes merciless, and then God's Justice will take hold on him, and destroy him, *Jer. 13. 14.* *And I'll dash them one against another, even the Fathers and the Sons together, says the Lord, I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them:* And if you will prevent the passing of this dreadful Sentence upon you, now is the time. Seek ye the Lord whilst he may be found, call ye upon him whilst he is nigh. Consider you have a whole Eternity to labour for, and you have, many of you, lost a great deal of time already; therefore make the better use of what is to
come,

come, it may be shorter than you are aware of. Ask Forgiveness forthwith, under all the Circumstances of Humility, on your bended knees, for all the Sins you have hitherto been shamefully guilty of, (for those Knees, which are now too strong to ply in God's Service, will be too weak one day to stand in his Presence) and keep a strict Account of all your Thoughts, Words, and Actions for the time to come, and every Night, before you compose your selves to sleep, bestow a little time in considering how you have spent the day, and see what evil you have committed, and what good you have omitted, that you may certainly and sincerely crave Forgiveness for it; which is the properest and most likely method for getting into a Habit of Vertue and Goodness, especially if you are careful to return Thanks to God in the Morning for preserving of you from the perils of the Night,
and

and earnestly desire that his Favour and Blessing may attend you throughout the whole Day, and that he would prevent your evil Actions, and bring your good ones to perfection ; And not adventure to lie down in the Sins not only of that Day, but of many Years, as too many careless People do, 'tis much to be feared, lest you should sleep the sleep of Death, spoken of in *Psalm* 13. 3. and the Wrath of God should seize upon you, and cast you into the dismal place of eternal misery : But immediately fix your Resolutions for the glorious Kingdom of everlasting Happiness, and let Piety be your continual practice, which is the certain way of attaining of it.

Cease to do evil, learn to do well, and be not weary of it, but be diligent Followers of them that through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises ; and in due season you shall reap

to the Devil's Agents. 71

reap your Reward, and be owned by Christ, when he comes in the Glory of the Father, with the Holy Angels, and appears to those that look for him the second time without sin, unto Salvation.

FINIS.

to the D.C. Agent

England's Shame :

O R,

RELIGION

MORE OUR

Prattle than Practice.

Scarce ever was the Almighty more talked of and less served than now ; for such is the perversity of People, that they generally neglect and despise the sacred Ways of the most High, and imprudently follow their own sinful Ways and Inventions ; and are so remiss in the Service of that great God, who has formed them to shew forth his Praise, that they seldom perform any sincere

cere Acts of Obedience and Worship to him ; but are wholly taken up in Trading and Worldly Commerce, and partaking of those sinful Pleasures, which the vain World stiles the Innocent Recreations of Life, and the Refreshment of languishing Nature ; and have not the Prudence to consider that there lies a greater Obligation upon them to keep a Trade in Heaven for the Preservation, Nourishment, and Salvation of their Souls, than for the use and necessities of their Bodies here upon Earth ; and that 'twould in the end return them far greater profit than any of their worldly employments, and be no hinderance but a furtherance in them : for then God would prosper all their undertakings, and bless their endeavours with Success : for their working so little for Heaven is the Reason their Works here on Earth do so rarely answer their expectation in the Profits resulting from them : Nor is this all the damage they'll sustain by it, the loss of part of that Happiness they might otherwise here enjoy ; but 'tis the way to lose Heaven also, the very thoughts whereof,
to

to a person of consideration, are dreadful. And yet how apparent is this to any one that makes but a little Observation of the Conversation of most People? Have Men, think ye, those Entercourses with Heaven, and Correspondencies with the Almighty, by frequent Praying, and the Performances of other holy exercises, that they ought, when their Imaginations do so abound with Mischief, and their Practices are so full of Evil and Iniquity? Is it supposable that any one does exercise his Tongue, Knees and Heart, in Prayer Mornings and Evenings, if Cursing and Swearing be his ordinary Communication good part of the Day besides? I should rather think if he seriously began the Day with the Service of God, he would have him often in his thoughts as he was about his Worldly Business; and instead of serving the Devil with vain Oaths and prophane and obscene Discourses, he would serve the Lord, by frequently offering up some short Ejaculations, and Sacrifices of Praise unto him, and would be much taken up in Contemplation of that glorious Kingdom above, which is visible to him by the

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Eye of Faith, and thinking and endeavouring how to obtain an everlasting Habitation there, and by making it sometimes the Subject of his Discourse, move others to seek diligently after it also, and so in some measure fulfill the Command of the most high God, *Prov. 23. 17. Be thou in the fear of the Lord, (Be thou at the Work of the Lord) all the Day long.* But you'll say, you are under the Pressures of Poverty, and therefore you have not leisure to be so much at the Work of the Lord, as otherwise you would. How comes it to pass then that you have so much Leisure for the Work of the Devil? How d'ye find time to gratifie your Lusts, and commit Sin? Can you find opportunities to inspect the Concerns of others, and enumerate their failings with Additions and Pejorations resulting from your passionate, invidious and defaming Dispositions, and yet want opportunities for the performance of Christian Duties? You can frequently Watch the greater part of the Night in immoderate Drinking or Gaming, and why can't you Watch now and then part of a Night and be sober

ber unto Prayer? The former may, and I presume often does, indispose you for the Business of your Callings the next Day, tho' through the Delight you take in it, you are not apt to complain of it; but the latter cannot; for whereas the other is forbidden and displeasing to God, this is commanded and most pleasing unto him. 1 Pet. 4. 7. *Be ye therefore Sober, and Watch unto Prayer.* 'Tis admirable to observe how officious some People are to the Devil, that they are so earnest to engage in his Service, that, that Person shall be looked upon as their Enemy that shall endeavour to restrain them from it, Do but endeavour to with-hold a Drunkard from his intemperate Companions, and you shall presently hear him accusing you of Severity towards him, and denying him the pleasures of Society. And do but reprove a common Sower of Dissention, and Kindler of the Fire of Contention, and immediately his Tongue, which is set on Fire of Hell, as the Apostle says, *James 3. 6.* flames out most furiously upon you, and wounds you in your Reputation at least, if it proceeds no farther, perhaps in your

Estate, Life and all, if the Poison of Asps, which is under his Lips, will do it. And tho' these Solicitors of Hell are the Occasion of a great deal of Trouble and Inquietude to themselves and others; yet such is the present State of the World, that they are not suppressed, but rather encouraged by some avaricious Persons, that have more Respect to the Profit they bring to them, than the Publick and Universal Good that would arise from their Suppression. And when the Passionate Man is a little moved, 'tis in vain to talk to him of Meekness and Patience; he must be revenged on the Person that has offended him, if no other ways, at least by pouring out a great deal of ill Language at him: and if the Person offending be readier also to obey the Devil than God, and will not endeavour to make use of that, which according to the Wiseman, *Prov. 15. 1.* is the best Expedient to pacifie Anger, A soft Answer; but will imprudently answer him in the like, or worse Language, according to the Suggestions of the Devil, that prompts him to it, and diverts himself by hearing them rail at each other, and imploy those Tongues which

which were design'd for Blessing, in Defiance of Heaven, to Cursing, to the unspeakable Injury of their Souls; especially if it be attended with the usual Consequence, an Hatred not easily reconcileable: For do we not commonly see men, after such scurrilous and unchristian-like Contentions, deny each other all Offices of Kindness, and pass by one another, as if they were degenerated into Brutes, or by an unhappy Dissolution of the Nerves of the Tongue, they had lost their Voices. Oh! that ever frail Mortals, who know themselves to be but Dust, should be thus puffed up with Pride and Malice, as to set themselves against their Maker and hate them which bear his Image, as well as themselves, because they do not exactly sympathize in their Temperaments; when our Love and Friendship to one another is the best Assurance we have that we are passed from Death unto Life. *1 John, 3. 14. We know that we have passed from Death unto Life; because we Love the Brethren; he that loveth not his Brother, abideth in Death.* And if I say that he is a Murderer, and in a State of Damnation, and that Eternal Life a-

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bideth not in him, the next Verse speaks the same. *Whosoever hateth his Brother, is a Murtherer, and ye know that no Murtherer has Eternal Life abiding in him.* Who, but a Mad-Man, would thus nourish Death in his own Breast? I mean a Spiritual Death, which is consistant with the Life of the Body, *Rev. 3. 1. I know thy Works, that thou hast a name that thou Livest, and art Dead.* (that is, thou livest unto Sin, but art dead unto Righteousness, and there is no Spiritual Life in thee) And how many of us, if we did make a diligent search into our Conditions, might find our selves dead in this Sense? For if we were alive in the Spirit it would appear in our Actions; For the Spirit is of a lively active Nature, and will manifest itself by it's Fruit, which is Love, Peace, Joy, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness and Temperance; and are not these things very rare and unconstant amongst us? But for the Works of the Flesh, which are Swearing, Lying, Theft, Malice, Drunkenness, Adultery and such like, what is more common amongst us? And yet we are so imprudent as to account our selves in good Circumstances

stances enough ; and because we are called Christians, and perform some few Duties now and then a little lightly and superficially we think our selves safe, and in no Danger of the Wrath to come. But what will it avail us that we are called Christians, if our Practices are Antichristian, and quite contrary to the Rules Christ has commanded us to walk by ? To what Purpose is it for us to hope for eternal Life, whilst we continue in Sin, the Wages whereof we are told in God's Word is Death, *Rom. 6.* at the last Verse. This is a deceiving and false Hope, for if you had a true Hope in you, you would not live any longer in Sin, but immediately purifie your selves from dead Works, that you might be in Likeness, tho' not in Equality, pure, even as he is, whose most Glorious Presence you hope to enjoy. *1 John 3. 3.* *And every Man that has this Hope in him purifies himself, even as he (that is God) is pure.* Don't rely too much upon any false and groundless Hope, and promise Salvation to your Selves in any other way than God has promised it t'ye ; but search the Scriptures in which you think you have Eternal Life, and view your hearts
in

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in that Sacred Glafs, whether they are sincere towards God, and see there what good qualifications and vertues are necessary to fit any one for the Kingdom of everlasting Happiness. Read the 15th Psalm, and see what Answer the Holy Spirit makes to David proposing the Question, *Lord, who shall abide* (יָגוּר Sojourn) *in thy Tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy Hill? He that walks uprightly, and works Righteousness, and speaks the truth in his Heart. He that backbiteth not* (לֹא-דָבַר that does not revile, discredit, or slander) *with his Tongue, nor does evil to his Neighbour, (לֹא-רֵעוּהוּ to his Friend and Companion) nor takes up a Reproach against his Neighbour. In whose Eyes a vile Person is contemned; but he honours them that fear the Lord; he that Swears to his own hurt, (that is, to his own Loss, Damage or Hindrance) and changes not. He that puts not out his Money to Usury, (the Hebrew Word here for Usury is נִשְׁךְ which cometh from נָשַׁךְ which properly signifies to Bite, and is often spoken of the Biting or Stinging of Serpents, to denote, as I suppose, it's grievous Stinging Nature, and to caution Men to beware of it, lest, whilst it affords an easy Maintenance*

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nance to their Bodys, it privily thrusts it's
poisonous Sting into their Souls; for tho' the
Ufury-Giver feels its Sting most here, the
Receiver is in most Danger of feeling it
hereafter) *nor takes Reward (or Bribe) a-
gainst the Innocent; he that does these things
shall never be moved.* And try if you can
truly apply it to your selves, and say with-
out Hypocrisie that you are such Persons, as
this Person here Characterized is, who is
promised that he shall never be moved; and
if you can, you are in a very happy State,
and my most ardent desire is that you may
keep on and prosper: but if you cannot, I
must say your State is miserable, and it
highly behoves you forthwith to seek out
for Recovery; otherwise, tho' you may
hope for Heaven, you may at the last be
cast into Hell. For 'tis difficult, tho' the
Devil by his Subtilty may have perswaded
some People that 'tis easy to attain Heaven;
for if ever you enter in at the strait Gate,
it must be by striving and labouring dili-
gently in Duty; yea, so hard a thing it is,
that many shall seek to enter in, and shall
not be able. *Luke 13. 24. Strive to enter
in at the strait Gate, for many, I say unto
you,*

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you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. And if so, how can some of you, who, 'tis to be doubted, scarce ever seek sincerely at all for entrance, hope to enter in? Beware that the malicious Enemy of Mankind, and your own treacherous and sinfull Hearts don't deceive you in this point; you may do too little to be saved, and this is the thing you are in danger of: but assure your selves you can never do too much; and if you did but rightly consider the unexpressible worth of it, you would think you could never do enough for it. Are the things of this Life, which are casual and uncertain in the Fruition, so estimable, that you will purchase them with so great Care and Labour? and are the glorious Things, which God has prepared above for them that Love, Serve and Obey him, which Eye has not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive the greatness of their Excellency, not worth a little seeking after? Does God say, *Mat. 6. 33. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, and all these things (the things of this World) shall be added (so far as God sees them necessary for you) unto you.* And

And will you not believe the Almighty, who is Truth it self, and cannot lye? but first seek after the Earth, and the pleasures thereof, and then seek after the Kingdom of God? or will you content your selves with Earthly Things, and never seek after it at all, or to any purpose? You think, I presume, that you are making towards the Prize of your High Calling, and that you are travelling for the Illustrious Regions of everlasting Felicity; but are you sure you began where God directed you, and walk carefully in that way which he has appointed, which is in Righteousness; if you are not, your Expectations may be frustrated, and you may make an end of your Journey in the dreadfull Place of Eternal Misery. Be advised before it be too late; I doubt the Devil, the World and the Flesh have had the greater part of your time hitherto, and therefore God has not had his due; ask Pardon forthwith for it, and let him have his due for the time to come; let the Devil have none, the World and the Flesh no more than is necessary, and let God have the rest. Is it not a sad Case; Judge you your selves of it, when God has set aside
but

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but one Day in seven to be kept Holy unto him, and to have his Pleasure only done in it, that you do prophane it, and do your own Pleasure the greater part of it, and are either misimploying your selves in vain Discourses, wicked Diversions, and impious Exercises, or contriving how you may carry on your worldly Business more advantageously the Week following. And if you would but reform and amend in this particular, hear what a gracious promise God makes t'ye, *Isaiah 58.* and the two last Verses. *If thou turn away thy Foot from the Sabbath,* (that is if thou withholdest or refrainest thy self from thy evil Works) *from doing thy Pleasure on my Holy Day, and call the Sabbath, a Delight, the Holy of the Lord, Honourable, and shalt Honour him, not doing thine own Ways, nor finding thine own Pleasure, nor speaking thine own Words, (vain Words) Then shalt thou delight thy self in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high Places of the Earth, and feed thee with the Heritage of Jacob thy Father; for the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* But now the destroyer of Souls comes, and endeavours to put these things out of your minds,
and

and puts you upon talking of National Concerns, how Affairs are carried beyond Sea, the Motions and Transactions of the Armies, and the rehearsing of the Errors and Failings of others, and upbraiding of them; and which of these you do most frequently obey, God or the Devil, ask your own Practices. D'ye think 'tis enough for you to come now and then to Church, and sit there in a careless and inattentive manner, as if what was spoken did not concern you, or sleep, to let us know that you wake so much in the Service of the World and Sin, that you cannot wake an hour or two in the Worship of God? or is it because you are afraid that if you don't sleep there, you shall be apt to sleep in the remaining part of the Day, and so lose the opportunity of gratifying some Lust or other you have foolishly design'd to gratifie? What is the end of Ministers Preaching, and your coming to hear? but that you may understand your own Duties, and be enabled to instruct your Families, by examining of them, and repeating to them, as much of it as you have been able to commit to your Memories, when you come home. 'T would be more prudent

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prudent and pious for you to do this, and to enter your Children and Dependants into Christ's School, and teach them to read and to pray, and to do good, and abstain from evil ; than to neglect it, and suffer the Devil to take them under his Tuition, and teach them to Curse, Swear and Blaspheme: But 'tis like some of you may be so Wicked as to save him this Pain, and teach them to Swear your selves, by being a continual example to them, and when you can leave nothing else to them, leave them your Vices ; and as you have brought them into the troubles and cares of this Life ; so help to bring them to everlasting Death and Destruction also. You would think your selves very Barbarous and Cruel, if you should Cut and Wound your Childrens Bodies, and yet many of you do that which is much worse, you wound their Souls ; for every Sin they commit from your Examples, or through your Neglect in restraining of them, you give a Wound unto their Souls. Remember what the Wise Man says in this Case, *Prov. 22. 6. Train up a Child in the Way he should go,* (חנך לנער) *על-פי דרכו* instruct a Child in the manner of

of his Way) and when he is Old, he will not depart from it. And obey the Command of the Apostle, who bids you Bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, Ephes. 6. 4. That they may have cause to bless you for their Good and Vertuous Education, and not to curse you for imprudently suffering them to get into a Habit of Wickedness, when they are under the Troubles and Vexations they have plunged themselves into by it. Μακάριόν ἐστιν, υἱὸν ἱστακτὸν τρέφειν. 'Tis a blessed thing to have Children well Educated, it makes both Parents and Children happy: And hence the Learned and Judicious Plutarch does so earnestly press Parents to use their utmost Care and Skill, in this Respect; Περὶ πάντων γὰρ δεῖ τοὺς πατέρας τῷ μηδὲν ἁμαρτάνειν, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἃ δεῖ πράττειν, ἐναργῆς ἑαυτὸς παρὰ δειψμα τοῖς τέκνοις παρέχειν ἵνα πρὸς τὴν τέτων βίον, ὥσπερ κάτοπτρον ἀποβλέποντες, ἀποτρέπωνται τῶν αἰσχρῶν ἔργων καὶ λόγων ὡς οἱτινες τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν υἱοῖς ὀπιμωνίης, τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι περιπλῆουσιν, ὅτι τῷ ὀκείνων ὀνόματι λανθάνουσιν ἑαυτῶν κατήγοροι. γινώσκουσιν οἱ δ' ὅλως φάυλως ζῶντες, καὶ τοῖς δέλοισ παρρησία ἀγασιν ὀπιμωνίην, μή-

τοι γε δὴ τοῖς υἱοῖς· χωρὶς δὲ τέτων, γένοιτο
 ἂν αὐτοῖς τῶν ἀδικημάτων σύμβουλοι καὶ διδά-
 σκαλοι· ὅπερ γὰρ γέροντες εἰσιν ἀναίσχυτοι,
 ἐνταῦθ' ἀνάγκη καὶ νέεσι ἀναιδεστιάταις εἶναι.

Take the meaning of it briefly thus, Pa-
 rents ought chiefly to beware of Sinning be-
 fore their Children, but to be as Exempla-
 ry to them in Goodness as possibly they can:
 for if they learn them to Sin by their own
 Examples, their reprov'ing of them is likely
 to prove ineffectual: and if the old People
 in a Family are vicious, lewd and shame-
 less, the young ones, by observing of it,
 will soon arrive to the highest Pitch of Vice
 and Shamefulness. And if you would but
 forthwith set about this most necessary
 Work of instructing your Families, accord-
 ing to your best abilities, in the Principles
 of Religion, and endeavour to revive that
 good Custom of having holy Conferences
 on Sundays, after you had a little used your
 selves to it, you would find such Pleasure
 and Delight in them, that you would have
 them on other Days also, as often as you
 could have Opportunities for them, and
 would utterly renounce those Vain and
 Prophane Babblings; which are now so fre-
 quent

quent amongst you, as being sensible that they do gender Strifes, and encrease unto more Ungodliness, and instead of wounding Religion by making a great noise and clamour, and perversely opposing one another about it, endeavour to heal it's unhappy Breaches, by making good the Practice of it. And then we should be somewhat of the blessed temper of the holy *Psalmist*, and be as glad to go into the House of the Lord, as we are now generally to go forth of it, when we are there, which with many of us is too seldom: Then should our Light break forth as the Morning, and our Health and Peace spring forth speedily, and our Righteousness should go before us, and the Glory of the Lord would be our Reward; and the Churches would be full, and the Places of Carnal Mirth, the End whereof is Heaviness, would be empty; and when we called upon God, he would answer us in granting our requests, and guide us continually, and preserve us from all dangers, and we should be like fruitful Fields, which the Lord has blessed: and instead of leaving Posterity in Confusion and Perplexity, in point of Religion, leave them a true Scheme

of it drawn from the Oracles of God, and so be happily said to help to raise up the Foundations of many Generations, and be called the Repairers of the Breach, the Restorers of Paths for them to walk peaceably to Heaven in. Some people, 'tis observable, are apt to fancy themselves the People of God, because they belong to those Congregations, which they think are in the right way : but do they put that Doctrine, which they hear there, so far as it is agreeable to the Word of God, in Practice, and are Zealous of good Works? If they are not, 'twill stand them in little stead, that they are of such a Church or Congregation. They must have the fear of God and works of Righteousness always with them ; and then they need not fear being accepted of God, be they of what Church or Nation they will.

Acts 10. 34, 35. Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of Persons : But in every Nation, he that fears him, and works Righteousness, is accepted with him. But as one Man may think himself better than another, because he is richer and greater ; So he may think himself more in the Favour of Heaven, because he joyns with those that
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have a better way of Worship; but if his Religion be better, and framed more exactly from the Gospel than anothers; let him give God thanks for directing him to make so good a Choice, and be careful to walk up strictly to the Rules of it; for it may be better, for a Man not to know the Way of Truth, if he walks not in it, but lives as bad a Life, or worse, than those that have no knowledge of it; for the more a Man knows, if he does not do according to his knowledge the greater shall be his Punishment, *Luke 12. 47.* And certainly if we that are under the Gospel-Dispensation commit the same Sins that Heathens and Infidels do, we must expect to be punished more severely than they are; for we do it knowingly, but they for want of knowledge; for God has been graciously pleased to reveal his Holy Will unto us, but not unto them; a Mercy to be admired of us, and acknowledged by us, with perpetual thankfulness, and earnest Prayer to the Almighty that he would enable us to walk worthy of it, and be pleased to bestow the like blessing upon all the miserable Inhabitants of the dark Places of the Earth, and dispell those
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vast Clouds of Ignorance and Idolatry, that have overspread so many great and populous Nations, and bring them to such a knowledge of his dear Son as might engage them to Obedience to his Commands, and a careful Performance of all those holy Works he has enjoined his blessed Followers: And moreover, as we have taught them the Use of our Warlike Instruments, and how to destroy each others Bodies, wheresoever our Interest has induc'd us to converse with them; So we might do well to teach them the Use of our Religion, and how to preserve their Souls, and not to be led thus Captive by the Devil at his Will:

But there are so many Men of perverse Minds, risen up, that they do not only hinder this good and necessary Work abroad; but make Schisms and Divisions amongst us at home, and by broaching of new Opinions, and disputing and writing reproachfully one against another, make many wavering and unstedfast Persons, after they have tried several Religions, and are unsatisfied and uncertain which is the right, turn Atheists at last, and cast off all Religion: And as St. John the Divine said of those

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turbulent Fellows, that disturbed the sweet Peace and Tranquillity of the Church in his time, under pretence they were *Jews*, *Rev. 2. 9. . I know the Blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan* : So we may say of these, that tho' they pretend to be some of the best Christians, and to act for Christ, yet they do not, but destroy his Interest, and act contrary to his Will : For whilst he calls for Unity and Concord, they make Division and Discord, which is the Port at which many of our greatest Calamities enter. And certainly 'tis a most Ignominious and shameful thing, if we did but calmly consider of it, when the very Garment of our Head, the eternally Blessed Jesus was all but one Piece, to teach us Unity and Agreement, for us, that are his Body, to be torn, through Interest, Prejudice and Partiality, into so many Pieces, and bring a Reproach upon our Religion, and be upbraidingly told, by our defaming Adversaries, that we want one of the chief Marks of the true Church, which is Unity, and is one of the greatest Happineses, if we could but once obtain it, as no doubt but we might, if we sought
 rightly .

namely for Peace, Faith and Unity
 that this Word is necessary. And let us
 let us all forthwith pass an Act of Amity,
 and remember each others former Misde-
 mers no more, but be thoroughly reconciled,
 and use our utmost Endeavours, if it be
 possible, with one Mind and Voice, to give
 Glory to God on High, seek Peace on Earth,
 and shew Good will towards all Men, and
 live so peaceably and piously here in this
 State of Mortality, that we may hereafter
 joyfully live together in a State of Immor-
 tality.

F I N I S.
